

DC Bicycle Advisory Council

September 7, 2005

MINUTES

Members in Attendance

Amy Nevel
Liam Healy
Jim Sebastian
Lyn Stoesen
Julie Eisenhardt
Ellen Jones
Jay Belmore
Jeanie Osburn

Acting chair, Amy Nevel, called the meeting to order at 6:15, even though a quorum was not present. She began by introducing the newest member, Jay Belmore, who will be representing Ward 2. Jay is a full-time journalism student and part-time bike courier. He grew up in Oxon Hill, MD and has lived in DC since 1992.

Two committee seats remain open. These are both At Large for Mendelson and Catania. The DC Council is aware of the vacancies and has identified some candidates. They simply must appoint them.

Union Station Bike Station Presentation

Mr. Sebastian gave a PowerPoint presentation on the proposed Union Station Bike Station, which was followed by a period of questions and answers.

Approval of Minutes

A quorum was reached at 7:00 after the arrival of another BAC member. At this time, the Council approved the July minutes.

Committee Reports

Ms. Jones gave a brief summary of the facilities committee's August meeting. Their discussion focused on the bike station and current regulations for placing bike parking in public space. The committee is concerned that in order to place a bicycle rack in public space the adjacent property owner must approve. Their refusal is enough to prevent the installation of the rack. Similar requirements are not in place for parking meters, sign and light posts. Why should bicycle racks be different? They also discussed indoor bike parking. Current regulations require that all garages in office, retail, or commercial areas have a minimum amount of bicycle parking equivalent to 5% of the automobile parking capacity. However, there is no encouragement for owners to provide showers and changing rooms. The legislative committee agreed to take ownership of this task.

Next, there was some deliberation if the BAC should send a letter of support to the appropriate agency for the continued development of the Union Station Bike Station. Ms. Nevel asked if there were any objections to a letter of support. Since there were no objections, the discussion turned to what agency should receive the letter. It was agreed that the letter would be addressed to the Commission on Fine Arts. Ellen Jones volunteered to draft the letter for Mr. Sebastian (the Mayor and Dan Tangherlini will be carbon copied) to take to the scheduled September 15 meeting of the Commission on Fine Arts. All members will have a chance to review, comment and approve the letter. Alexa added that it would be a good idea for the East Coast Greenway Alliance to draft a letter of support as well. The facilities committee meets the first Tuesday of the even months.

Lyn Stoesen proceeded to give a summary of the legislative committee meeting. They also discussed bike parking but did not come to a resolution regarding the required approval of adjacent property owners. Eric Gilliland (WABA) brought a copy of the Police Complaints Board's report on the recommended elimination of mandatory bike registration. The committee also discussed what other agencies should be represented on the BAC. They thought that representatives from the DC Department of Health, WMATA, and DC Board of Education should be present, while the DC Energy Office should be removed. Courier legislation was also discussed. The committee wondered why couriers are required to be licensed since nobody gets licensed and you can't actually do it. Ms. Eisenhardt told the group that city couriers are all independent contractors, meaning that no taxes are withheld from their salary, and they receive no benefits. She added that there has been discussion of forming a union that could lobby for better wages and benefits but organizing has been difficult. Ms. Jones suggested that legislative committee members check with the DC Bicycle Courier Association for their recommendations on courier licensing reform. Finally, there was some discussion on how to solve the problem of cars driving in bike lanes. The committee would like to invite Angela Freeman (DDOT General Counsel's office) to come to one of the meetings.

Julie Eisenhardt summarized the safety, education, and enforcement committee meeting. They discussed the new bus/bike lane and their overwhelming use by cars. One proposed solution is education about bike lanes and bus/bike lanes for drivers of buses and cars. She added that Metro will be giving education courses to their bus drivers. Ellen Jones said that the lanes will eventually be painted red, but she does not know exactly when that will occur. In the meantime, the committee will draft a letter for approval, at the next BAC meeting, calling for increased enforcement of the bus/bike lanes. Committee members also talked about the speed study that is now underway. The study will assess whether current speed limits on various roads are appropriate. Members pointed out that in other cities this has always led to increasing the speed limits. The committee agreed to invite the consultants who are doing this study to attend a meeting. Lt. Hope will be including more bicycle education in the police academy training. There was more talk of giving out McDonald's ice cream coupons as a reward for children wearing bicycle helmets. The committee meets the second Wednesday of month at Teatism, 400 8th St NW.

DDOT Bicycle Program Project Status and Budget

Mr. Sebastian presented his project status and budget spreadsheet to the BAC for comments. Jim said that a proposed South Capitol St trail and Suitland Parkway trail are not yet on this budget since they have not yet been approved. He will be meeting with the park service next week to discuss the Suitland Parkway trail. Ellen Jones pointed out that pages 44 and 45 of the bike master plan has a section of benchmarks for the bicycle program. Ms. Osburn requested that maintenance of trails be addressed in this list.

Updates

Ms. Jones reminded all that the DC Recreational Trails Committee meets the first Tuesday of the month.

Saturday, October 1 - WalkingTown DC will present a day of free neighborhood walking and biking tours. From 9 am to 12 Dan Tangherlini will be the tour guide for “Anacostia by Bike.” For more information, see www.culturaltourismdc.org.

Oct 15 - Bike Ride

The National Park Service has bicycle tours on weekends. For more information visit nps.gov/nama/.

Liam Healy reminded all members to contact Jim if they see a street being resurfaced. It is possible that Jim may not know about it.

Amy Nevel told new member, Jay Belmore, of the BAC requirement to serve on at least one subcommittee. She suggested that he attend at least one of the meetings next month and tell Jim his preference.

The meeting adjourned promptly at 8 pm.